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Book Notices

EGYPT AND THE BIBLE¹

This little volume of one hundred and thirty-four pages takes up the patriarchal stories from Abraham down to the Samson myth, and by identifying the characters and the incidents of the Hebrew stories with those in the Egyptian myths endeavors to demonstrate the Egyptian origin of the Old Testament materials contained in these tales. The method is that of discovering certain resemblances in the externals and then assuming the identity of the essential substance. Such a method unavoidably involves the author in fanciful comparisons and fantastic assumptions, which do not command the reader's assent. The method of plunging at once into the patriarchal stories without laying down any preliminary principles or historical foundations, arouses distrust from the beginning. The author begs his readers, after the perusal of twenty or thirty pages, not to lay the book aside in dissent, but to follow his arguments to the end. This remark is in the preface, accompanied by reference to the widespread influence of Egypt in Palestine as disclosed by recent excavations there. This reference, it would seem, might have suggested to the author how hopelessly weak is a series of casual and accidental resemblances between the patriarchal stories of the Hebrews and the Egyptian myths, when these parallels are set up in complete isolation without reinforcement by means of a background of demonstrable historical contact between Palestine and Egypt.

To any thinking orientalist of historical insight it must have been evident from the beginning that a politically insignificant power like that of the Hebrews in Palestine, situated at the very threshold of Egypt, must have been completely dominated by Egyptian influence. The vast and complex civilization on the Nile was continually in the closest contact with the life of Palestine, and just as we cannot think of the civilization of Germany without the influence of French and Italian culture, so the history and civilization of Palestine are inconceivable except as constantly involved in manifold influences from the Nile. Since the excavation of Gezer and Megiddo, we are in a position to discern these Egyptian influences in Palestine in so far as they found expression in the *material* life of the time. These material documents show us that the influence of Egyptian civilization was dominant in Palestine from the earliest times down to a thousand years B. C. As far as Palestine is concerned, pan-Babylonianism, already defunct after the exposé made by Kugler,

¹ AEGYPTEN UND DIE BIBEL. Die Urgeschichte Israels im Licht der ägyptischen Mythologie von Dr. Daniel Vöter, Professor der Theologie in Amsterdam. Vierte, neu bearbeitete Auflage. Leiden: Buchhandlung und Bruckerei Vormals. E. J. Brill, 1909.

has been completely annihilated by the results of the excavations in Palestine.

Professor Völter's book is a praiseworthy attempt to set forth the real situation, but in the reviewer's opinion his method is quite insufficient and his conclusions go entirely too far.

JAMES HENRY BREASTED

A HIERATIC READER¹

One of the greatest and most inconvenient gaps in our equipment for university instruction in Egyptian has been due to the lack of hieratic texts which could be put into the hands of students. Such texts are usually published by the various museums in sumptuous plate form, at a cost prohibitive to the purse of the individual student. For years such students have been obliged to do as the writer did in his student days, viz., go to the library and laboriously copy, or, if the library rules permitted, trace a copy from the published plates of the document.

Moeller's great *Hieratische Palaeographie*² is of such importance in the teaching of Egyptian, that for the first time a hieratic chrestomathy becomes a really feasible enterprise. It was therefore a wise extension of that work to prepare and issue a sufficient number of important hieratic documents to illustrate the chief periods, and in such cheap form as to be quite within the reach of any student of oriental languages. The present instalments are two of three, each to cost about four marks (less than a dollar). The first "Heft" contains twenty-five carefully autographed plates representing the period of Old and Middle Hieratic, and comprising literary, historical, business, and scientific documents. The value of these materials is increased by the references to the *Palaeographie*, which the author has added to each difficult sign or ligature, in the form of a number designating the said sign in the *Palaeographie*.

The second "Heft" is devoted to the literary texts of the Empire, and includes tales (Märchen) like the Papyrus d'Orbiney and the tale of the Cursed Prince. The historical texts include the poem on Ramses' II Repulse of the Hittites, the historical section in the great Papyrus Harris, and a portion of the Report of Wen-amon. The section on religious texts comprises the myth of the Sun God, the hymn to Thoth, a portion of the great hymn to Amon in the Cairo Museum, and the prayer of Ramses III to Amon from the Papyrus Harris; also another prayer to Amon from the Papyrus Anastasi. Among the poetical texts, Moeller has chosen the hymn to Menephtah from the Papyrus Anastasi III; and the description of the royal palace from Anastasi II; also some of the love poems for which the Egyptian literature is so well known. The miscellaneous section at the end includes Papyrus Sallier and some of the literature of instruction in the Anastasi papyri. Moeller's work will form the standard chrestomathy, indispensable to every teacher and every student of Egyptian.

JAMES HENRY BREASTED

¹ HIERATISCHE LESESTÜCKE für den akademischen Gebrauch herausgegeben von Georg Moeller. Erstes Heft: Alt- und mittelhieratische Texte. Zweites Heft: Literarische Texte des neuen Reiches. Small folio. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909.

² Reviewed on pp. 133 f. of *AJSL*, XXVI, No. 2.